

to end the era of irresponsibility in Washington.

End of quote by the President.

I could not agree more. Congress and the administration need to find a better way to fund current military operations. Most of these funds are expected and should be addressed in the regular budget process.

Again, I want to provide our troops with the funding and the resources they need to be successful as they work to protect America. I do not, however, want the brave men and women of the Armed Forces nor the families of America who have been truly impacted by unforeseen disasters to be used as justification for unchecked and, in some cases, unrelated spending.

The men and women of our armed services deserve better than this spending bill. The people of the United States deserve better.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TERRORISTS AND GUNS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, earlier this month, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee held a hearing on the threat posed by the ability of terrorists to purchase firearms in America and legislative proposals to address that threat. Before purchasing a firearm, an individual currently must undergo a background check to search for disqualifying characteristics such as a felony conviction or a history of domestic violence. However, if the background check reveals that the prospective buyer is on the terrorist watch list, law enforcement legally cannot block the sale unless the individual falls into another disqualifying category. In other words, being on a terrorist watch list does not prevent someone from buying a gun.

To close this dangerous loophole, I support S. 1317, the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act, which was introduced by Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG. I am a cosponsor of this legislation because it would authorize the Attorney General to deny the transfer of a firearm when an FBI background check reveals that the prospective purchaser is a known or sus-

pected terrorist and the Attorney General has a reasonable belief that the purchaser may use the firearm in connection with terrorism.

Law enforcement should have the authority to block the purchase of a firearm by a known or suspected terrorist. Giving them that authority is simply common sense and has support across the political spectrum. At the May 5 hearing, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg expressed his support, and that of the other 500 American mayors who are members of the bipartisan coalition Mayors Against Illegal Guns, for passing S. 1317. Mayor Bloomberg focused on data recently released by the U.S. Government Accountability Office showing that between 2004 and 2010, individuals on the terrorist watch list were able to purchase firearms and explosives from licensed dealers 1,119 times. I agree with Mayor Bloomberg's testimony that this data represents a serious threat to our national security and that Congress needs to act to address it.

Representative PETER KING, ranking member of the House Homeland Security Committee, also appeared at the hearing and spoke about legislation similar to S. 1317 that he introduced in the House. Congressman KING mentioned that his bill has Republican and Democratic cosponsors and would have a positive impact on law enforcement agencies across the country, highlighting the support of the International Associations of Chiefs of Police.

Closing the "terror gap" also is supported by an overwhelming majority of American gun owners. In December 2009, pollster Frank Luntz conducted a poll showing that 82 percent of NRA members and 86 percent of non-NRA gun owners favored a proposal to prevent individuals listed on a terrorist watch list from purchasing firearms.

Closing the loophole in Federal law that prevents law enforcement from blocking the sale of firearms to terrorists is not a controversial proposal. To the contrary, legislative efforts to close the "terror gap" enjoy widespread, bipartisan support. In order to keep Americans safe, it is essential that law enforcement is provided with every legal tool to keep guns out of the hands of known or suspected terrorists. I urge my colleagues to take up and pass S. 1317, the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act.

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I regret that I was unavoidably detained on May 24, 2010, and missed rollcall votes No. 163 and No. 164. I ask that the RECORD reflect that had I been present I would have voted as follows: rollcall vote No. 163, a Brownback motion to instruct conferees: "yea"; rollcall vote No. 164, a Hutchison motion to instruct conferees: "yea."

#### NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of National Mental Health Awareness Month to fight the stigma associated with mental illness that discourages people from seeking help and raise awareness of disparities in access to mental health services.

The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that while only 6 percent of Americans suffer from a serious mental illness, over a quarter of adults suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. These illnesses—depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, phobias, personality and body image disorders, and substance addictions—are real diseases with proven treatments.

Mental health determines how we make decisions, handle stress, and relate to others, consequently affecting our relationships with our families, our colleagues, and our communities. Normally defined as how one thinks, feels, behaves, and copes, mental health is as integral to our well-being as our physical health. However, mental health disorders are chronically underdiagnosed and undertreated.

While public education and awareness campaigns can go a long way in addressing the stigma associated with mental health disorders, improved access to high-quality mental health care should be a national priority. Unfortunately, access to mental health services is often more disparate than access to medical care, particularly in rural areas. Rural States like South Dakota have long struggled to recruit and retain an adequate mental health workforce to meet the needs of their citizens. I am pleased the new health reform law will increase investments in the health care workforce, including mental health providers. Increased access to adequate and meaningful health insurance coverage has also been addressed with health reform, ensuring more Americans can obtain the care they need. All too often, insurance companies have failed to cover mental health services or impose restrictive measures on the scope and duration of the treatment. Last Congress, I was proud to cosponsor and support passage of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, which ensures health insurance coverage for mental health services is comparable to coverage of physical ailments.

In the short term, however, I remain deeply concerned about our Nation's mental health safety net. I recently joined several colleagues in support of increased funding for comprehensive community services for low income and uninsured people living with mental illnesses. While the economic downturn has placed an additional financial strain on Federal, State, and family budgets, community mental health centers and other safety net providers are simultaneously reporting a significant increase in demand for mental